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Beyond the Mountain

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BEYOND THE MOUNTAIN

BY

AUNT SADIE
(SARAH STOKES HALKETT)

Illustrated by Katharine Pyle

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To

MY NIECES AND NEPHEWS

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Note

Of the verses in this volume the following have been set to music by Charles Harvey, and are published as songs for children by Carl Fischer, 48 Cooper Square, New York:

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Beyond the Mountain

The Indian Pipes

Once, long ago, an Indian Chief
Sat smoking at his ease—
Beyond the mountain, past the stream,
Among the silent trees—
When, from a branch, a fairy dropped
And sat upon his knees.

" Old Indian Chief," the fairy said,
" You've smoked your pipe all day.
I really think you ought to stop;
I'd like to see you play."
The Indian Chief just shook his head
And muttered—" Go away!"

The fairy, laughing, said, "You're cross;
I'm sure you're full of smoke!
I wish you'd learn to laugh with me
And all the woodland folk."
Again the Indian puffed his pipe—
But not a word he spoke!

"Great Indian Chief," the fairy said,
"I think your manners crude;
To puff your pipe, when spoken to,
Is really rather rude.
You smoke too much;—I'm sure that's why
You sit all day and brood."

Then, taking up her magic wand
And coming very near,
The fairy touched the smoking pipe
And made it disappear.
The solemn Indian looked perplexed—
It certainly was queer.

"I've planted it," the fairy said:
"Look down upon the ground."
The Indian looked and can you guess
What, at his feet, he found?
The little Indian pipes we know
Were growing all around!

The Indian Chief, with awful wrath
And dignity, arose:
"You foolish fairy-thing," he said,
"I cannot smoke with those!"

. . . . . .

He left them in the woods to grow—
As everybody knows.

The Creeping Pine (Staghorn Moss)

A stag went bounding through the wood and met a noble pine.
He said: "Your branches spread too much; they're not as nice as mine."
The pine looked down and said, "What's that? Your antlers make you bold!
But *you* are young and foolish still while *I* am wise and old.
My branches spread because I'm tall and nearly touch the sky:
Of course I'm proud—you, too, would be if you were half as high."
This answer made the stag so cross (I'm sorry to relate)
That many times he struck the pine with most malicious hate.
At last he broke a little branch which fell upon the ground
And, as it fell, it struck him—crack!—he heard the horrid sound.
His antlers cracked he had no strength and could not get away;
Entangled in the pine tree branch upon the ground he lay.
A fairy, seeing what had happened, said: "Now, Stag, my friend,
Malicious hate in fond embrace will find a happy end.
Forever in the pine tree branch your antlers are entwined
And you can only get away by leaving them behind.
My tall and foolish Pine, your pride has well deserved its fall;
Your branch will learn humility in learning how to crawl."

. . . . . .

With magic wand the fairy touched the stag and set him free.
His broken antlers, left behind, in creeping pine we see.

The Hunter and the Arrowheads

One summer night I went to sleep adrift in my canoe
(Perhaps you think 'twas foolish and I quite agree with you
And so, asleep, I drifted to a stream I never knew.

While dreaming still I heard a voice that sounded like a croak.
It gave me such a fright that, in a panic, I awoke
And, wide-awake, I realized it was a frog that spoke.

He said, " You've drifted very far—I watched you coming here—
And some day, through such carelessness, you'll come to grief, I fear.
I wonder if you're ignorant and don't know how to steer? "

My boat had stopped its drifting course against a sunken log,
An end of which was still afloat, and on it sat the frog—
Among the dainty arrowheads that grow beside the bog.

He said: " You see the arrowheads and wonder why they grow?
I'll tell you, if you'd like to hear, because, of course, I know.
It happened once upon a time and very long ago.

. . . . . .

The fairies had a pretty fawn. They rode it through the wood
For, having learned its duties well, it always understood
And knew just when to go or stand—it was so very good.

A hunter, with his bow and arrows, came along this way.
He felt so very hungry, having had a tiring day,
That when he saw the fairies' fawn he shot it right away!

The Fly and the Pitcher Plant

When starting out to find the well
I stumbled on a root and fell.
Regaining somewhat scattered wits
I found my pitcher all in bits!
How could I get my master's drink?
I looked about and tried to think,
For soon he'd be at home to sup
And find no water in his cup.
Of course he'd scold and say, " How's this? "
And then at once his pitcher miss.
Another pitcher I must find
And say: " Good master, never mind!
Although the old one broke to-day
I got a new one on my way.
I'm sorry that you had to wait
But now you know why supper's late."
Then, scarcely knowing where to look,
I wandered, searching, by the brook
And there I heard a buzzing sound
Which came up from the boggy ground.
It said, " I can't get out—I can't—
I'm drowning in a pitcher plant!"
Imagine what was my delight
To find the pitcher plant in sight!
I said, " I thank you, little fly;—
'Twas fortunate I heard you cry,
For now, of course, I'll set you free
And take the pitcher home with me."

The Junco and the Hawkweed

A little junco sweet
Perched down beside my seat.
He said, " A hawk is out—
There'll soon be lots about.
I took an early walk
And heard the Elf King talk,
So flew straight here to you
To ask you what to do?
I really did my best
To make a pretty nest
And, while the eggs were there,
I kept them warm with care.
Of course I hoped to rear
My tiny nestlings dear—
But now the hawks will call
And surely eat them all!"
The junco hopped around—
I watched him on the ground;
Then, from a mossy stump,
Came Elf King with a jump.
He said: " You silly bird—
'Twas only half you heard;
My elves had planted seeds—
We talked of tawny weeds!"

The Merry Marigold

There was a foolish miser youth
Who thought he'd like to marry Ruth.
She knew it was his foolish way
To count the gold he made each day.
As coins upon the table rang
She heard the foolish song he sang:
" Oh! merry, merry, merry gold—
The nicest thing to have and hold!"
So when he whispered in her ear,
" I'd like to marry you, my dear,"
" No thank you!" was her quick reply.
And when he pleaded, "Tell me why,"
She said: " Because each day I see
That you are not in love with me.
You really ought to marry gold
For nothing else your love can hold."
" I'll prove my love for you!" he sighed.
Then, gently, pretty Ruth replied:
" To prove your love one way I know.
Beyond the mountain you must go
And follow down the marshy streams
To find a bloom I've seen in dreams.
You'll have to buy it from a witch;
Her price is high but you are rich."
" Of course I'll buy it, Ruth," he said.
He found the wooded path which led
Beyond the mountain. All the day
He counted gold upon his way

And lingered, loitering as he sang
His song to which the echoes rang:
" Oh! merry, merry, merry gold—
The nicest thing to have and hold!"
At last he found the ugly witch
Astride her broomstick in a ditch;
And, in the marsh beside her, sat
A very big and ugly cat.
It hissed and frightened him away
When, noticing the flowers gay
That grew in plenty all about,
He stooped to pick the biggest out.
The witch looked up and, scowling, said,
" You trespass in my flower bed!"
He answered: " Witch, to tell the truth,
I thought I'd pick a bloom for Ruth.
I hoped I shouldn't have to buy,
Because she said your price was high,
But, if I must, then please be nice
And name me just a modest price."
The witch screamed, " Modest price indeed!
'Tis *all* your fortune you will need
To buy a single bloom from me!
My cat protects them, as you see,
And if I bid her scratch and bite
She'll chase you quickly out of sight."
The miser youth was plunged in gloom.
To give his fortune for a bloom!
With one eye on the cat he spoke
And tried to treat it as a joke.
" Old Witch, indeed you're over-bold

To think I'll give you *all* my gold,—
You really almost make me laugh!
I wouldn't even give you half."
" 'Tis foolishness," the witch replied,
" To bargain for a loving bride!
Your golden coins are mean and small;
My bloom and Ruth are worth them all."
And then, at last, he understood
Why Ruth had sent him through the wood
To follow down the marshy streams
And find the bloom she'd seen in dreams.
She'd said he ought to marry gold—
That nothing else his love could hold.
He'd have to choose, poor miser youth,—
Give up his gold or forfeit Ruth!
" Oh, Witch! take all my gold," he said,
And all his gold before her spread.
" Your precious golden bloom I'll buy
In Ruth's dear, golden curls to lie.
It's name the marigold shall be
And so I'll marry gold, you see.
The nicest thing to have and hold—
My Ruth and merry marigold!"

Bunchberries

We are fairy pudding-berries.
  If you're hungry in the wood
And will help yourself, in passing,
  You will find that we are good.

We are red and very pretty
  But we're made without a plum—
And we haven't any raisins!
  Still we hope that you will come.

We are waiting, ripe and ready.
  Please be careful, as you walk,
Not to crush our bunch of berries;
  Take us gently by the stalk.

Dragon-green and the Green Dragons

Once, long ago, great Dragon-green
Between the trees was often seen,—
Just where the mountain slope begins.
This Dragon-green had many sins.
He stole papooses for his food
Because they tasted very good.
All birds and animals around
Were pounced upon as soon as found;
He ate them tender—ate them tough—
He never seemed to have enough.
By spitting fire he cooked them first
And, afterwards, he cooled his thirst
By drinking from the lake near by.
When, satisfied, he heaved a sigh
And went to sleep, his awful snore
Spread terror all about the shore.
One day he had unusual luck
And caught a splendid, bounding buck.
He spat his fire, to cook it well,
But in among the trees it fell
And then, in horrified amaze,
He saw the forest all ablaze!
His roaring made the mountain shake
As, plunging headlong in the lake,

He splashed the water round about
Until the fire was dampened out.
But what became of Dragon-green?
He sank and nevermore was seen.

. . . . . .

The lake is called " Spit-fire " to-day
And in the woods about (they say)
Peculiar dragons now are found—
They spit no fire and make no sound.
I think the Elf King made them grow
For Dragon-green of long ago—
That through their modest reticence
He might express his penitence.

The Shooting Stars

You sometimes see a shooting star
That seems to fly so fast and far;
It is a lantern all aglow—
The moon himself has told me so.
A fairy, travelling in the night,
Must try to keep her lantern bright
But when, at last, it burns away,
Above the clouds she goes to play.
The moon looks on while in and out
She chases stars all round about.
The brightest ones are very hot
(To touch them burns and hurts a lot)
And so, to be a clever fairy,
She must be quick and very wary
And use her lantern as a scoop
To catch a star in sudden swoop.
When one is caught, of course, I know
For then I see the lantern glow.
The fairy flies to far away:—
"Oh, see the shooting star!" you say.

. . . . . .

A little fairy once forgot
The care required when stars are hot:
She turned to gossip with the moon
And stretched her lantern out too soon.
She struck the star and burnt her hand
Then, crying, flew to fairyland
To ask the Queen to make it well.
She left the star behind;—it fell
And landed Colorado way
Where Elf King planted it to stay.
I've often heard the moon declare
That shooting stars are growing there.

The Musk-rat and the Cat-tails

Two pussy-cats once left their home;
They thought it would be nice to roam
Beyond the mountain—far away.
They kept on bravely, through the day,
But when night came they could not see—
The woods were thick as thick could be.
They scrambled out and found a bog
Where, settling on a mossy log,
Both tired and sad, they fell asleep
So did not see the musk-rat creep
As cautiously, without a sound,
He climbed up from the boggy ground
And, biting off the tail of each,
On mace-reed stuck it out of reach.
Of course the cats no longer slept;—
In pain and grief they mewed and wept,
Until a witch dropped from the sky
And said, " 'Tis time your eyes to dry;
I need a cat with me to ride
But crying cats I can't abide!
Now stop your dismal, doleful wail—
Away with me on broomstick sail.
One cat without a tail won't do,—
To balance stick I'll take the two."

Away they flew,—so far away
That where they went I cannot say.
But when they'd gone a fairy bright
Slid down the beams of soft moonlight.
She thought the tails looked very nice
And, with her wand, all in a trice,
From two cat tails made many more,
By magic learnt in fairy lore.
Around the bog we see them grow
And call them cat-tails, as you know.
I'm told that once in every year
The cats above the "Slou" appear:
Across the sky the old witch sails
To let them try to find their tails;
But which are theirs they cannot tell—
So many others grow as well.

Blue-bells

"I've dropped my bells, I've dropped my bells,
  Oh, dear! what shall I do?
I cannot stick them on again,—
  I haven't any glue!"

Around the hedge, around the hedge,
  I saw a fairy peep:
She said, "My little flower dear,
  Now tell me why you weep."

"I've dropped my bells, I've dropped my bells,
  And don't know what to do.
Oh! pretty fairy, golden bright,
  Have you got any glue?"

The fairy bright, the fairy bright,
  Came gaily tripping round
And, stooping, raised the dainty bells
  Which lay upon the ground.

"I'll tie them on, I'll tie them on,
  And hair-bells they shall be
Because I'll tie them with my hair,
  To make you think of me."

A hare came up, a hare came up,
  "The bells are mine!" he said.
"I'll take them down and hide them well
  In thickest bracken bed."

The fairy laughed, the fairy laughed,
  "You silly, selfish, hare!
The bells must stay where they are tied,—
  Their name with you I'll share."

Across the heath, across the heath,
  A witch came flying by:
"You've fastened all my thimbles up,—
  I've come to ask you why?"

"You lazy witch, you lazy witch,
  I'm sure you never sew!
But call them thimbles, if you like:—
  I've tied them on to grow!

They're *hair-bells* and they're *hare-bells* and
  They're *witches' thimbles* too.
Who minds a name when, just the same,
  The bells are always *blue!*"

The Silver Fairy's Forget-me-nots

I thought I'd fallen fast asleep,
(Though trying still awake to keep)
When, just below the window blind,
A fairy, of the silver kind,
Flew brightly shimmering through the dark,
Illumined by a tiny spark
To point of magic wand attached.
Its light the fairy's silver matched.
To me, in bed, the fairy came
And, softly whispering my name,
Said: "Dear, I've come your curls to borrow.
I'll bring them back at dawn to-morrow."
Above my head she lightly hovered
And so it was that I discovered
Her gentle eyes were blue and bright;—
I saw them as she flashed her light
And cut my curls off one by one.
With magic wand the work was done,
Then, silently, she flew away.
I knew no more till light of day
And then, because so strange it seemed,
I thought that I had surely dreamed
Till, wide awake, I looked around
And, by my head, a flower found.

Imagine what was my surprise—
'Twas like the fairy's pretty eyes!
So very soft and very blue—
There never was a sweeter hue.
Across a silver leaf attached
" Forget-me-not " was lightly scratched;
And, as these loving words I read,
Remembering what the fairy'd said,
I knew she'd brought them at the dawn
When bringing back the curls she'd shorn.
The curls were back where they should be
As, in the mirror, I could see;—
But how I wished the fairy dear
Had let me know that she was near!

. . . . . .

The flower in my garden grows
Between the pansies and the rose.
I hope the fairy'll see it there
And know it has the best of care.
But what about her curious task—
Why did she cut my curls, you ask?
I can't explain it when I try
So have to go on wond'ring why.

The Elf King's Honeysuckle

Once, long ago, the fairies kept
  A hive beneath the trees;
They liked to draw the honey sweet
  And loved to watch the bees.

The live-long day they fluttered round
  And poked about the hive
Until the Queen of Fairies said,
  "The bees don't seem to thrive.

You never give them any peace—
  You should be more polite;
I'll draw the honey out myself
  For supper every night."

So all went well until a bee,
  Who didn't like to work,
Was scolded by the Fairy Queen
  Because he tried to shirk.

She said: "The others work so hard—
  It really isn't fair;
You ought to lend a helping hand
  And try to do your share."

The lazy bee was very cross
  And stopped his buzzing song
To sting the gentle Fairy Queen—
  Although he knew 'twas wrong.

Then all the fairies kissed the Queen
  And chased the bees away:
No bees have lived in Fairyland
  Since that unhappy day.

. . . . . .

The Elf King found the empty hive
  And planted honeycomb
To make the honeysuckle grow
  About our porch—at home.

The Thimble-weed

A fairy said, " What's this I hear;—
Your doll has lost an arm, my dear? "
I said, " It's gone, as you can see;
It fell off when I climbed the tree."
And then the pretty fairy smiled;
She said, " I picked it up, my child:
I'd sew it on, if I were you.
The knotgrass for a start will do
And goldthread from the swamp is fine
To use with needles from the pine;
And look about for thimble-weed—
It's just exactly what you need."

Pussy-willow

One day, as I was sitting in my pleasant window seat,
I heard the pussy-willow hawker coming down the street.
'Twas eagerly that then I threw my window open wide
And beckoned to the hawker to come over to my side.
I bought a pussy-willow and I took it to my room
And stood it in some water, for I wanted it to bloom.
While doing this it seemed to me I heard a little sigh
But, being very busy, didn't stop to wonder why.
When late that night I went to bed, again a sigh I heard
And, just as I dropped off to sleep, I thought a kitten purred.
I wondered if a puss could be in hiding somewhere near,
And then a pussy-paw I felt—it gently touched my ear.
And, after that, I heard a voice and this is what it said:
" I'm little Pussy-willow on the table by your bed.
Though usually I'm good as gold and quiet as a mouse,
I've got to talk to-night because it's lonely in a house.
Oh! why was I brought here at all? I really wish I knew;—
I was so very happy in the meadow where I grew!
I hoped some day to see the world but, here, I'll fade away
And never see the mother-puss and never dance and play.
Now please don't look or try to move your head upon the pillow
And I will whisper in your ear the tale of Pussy-willow.

It happened once upon a time (a long, long time ago,
When little elves and fairies danced and spring was all ablow)

There was a witch who had a cat—a pussy soft and gray.
One day, when she was fast asleep, this pussy ran away
Because she was so tired of always riding through the sky
And sometimes she got dizzy on the broomstick, up so high.
She looked about until she saw a hollow willow tree
And, crawling in, she found a home as cosy as could be;
So there she tried to hide herself and all her kittens too:
To ride behind the witch she hoped another cat would do.
Of course the witch was not content and hunted night and day
To find her own beloved cat and make her ride away.
At last she found the willow tree and poked her head inside;
'I've found you now, my cat,' she said, 'come out and take a ride!'
Poor Puss was sadly frightened but she wouldn't leave the tree.
She said: 'I love my kittens and am happy as you see.
You'd better find another cat—I'm neither young nor quick
And, really, one must be alert to balance on the stick.'
The angry witch replied: 'You love your kittens more than me!
Now listen and I'll tell you what your punishment shall be.
Your hollow willow tree will shrink until it's just a bush;
I'll close the door against you and you needn't try to push;
No scratching and no pleading mew will do you any good;
You'll never get it open and you'll never break the wood.
I'll cast the spell securely for I know what I'm about:
The willow bush will hold you and will never let you out!'
When, late that night, the moon came out, the witch rode far away
And little elves and fairies came to join in merry play.
They, laughing, sang and danced about the hollow willow bush
Until they heard a plaintive mew and Fairy Queen said, 'Hush!'
Then listening, as they tip-toed round, they heard Puss-mother say,
'My kittens do be still and good—don't spoil the fairies' play.'

But still the kittens mewed: they said, 'You're old and glad to sleep;
We're young and want to see the world and tumble, run and leap.'
'Now, kittens all,' the fairies said, 'come out and play with us;
We really do not understand the need of all this fuss.'
'We cannot come, the kittens cried, 'the door is shut too well:'
We've pushed and scratched and tried in vain to break the witch's spell.'
The fairies and the little elves at once their dance forsook
And went away to Fairyland to find the fairy-book.
The fairies read it through and through, while elves held up the light;
They grieved to find that Mother-puss was in a hopeless plight.
Because she was the property of that revengeful witch,
They had no right to interfere,—possession was the hitch.
At last they found a spell by which the kittens could be freed
To see the world in spite of what the cruel witch decreed.
Returning to the willow bush they said: 'Poor kittens dear,
Be quiet now and listen—our decision you must hear.
You cannot run about and play, as other kittens do,
But in the spring, when flowers bloom, your bush will blossom too.
As little buds, like pussy-paws, you'll come out in the sun;
Each little seed will have a wing and then you'll have your fun.
As light as lightest thistle-down through meadows you'll be whirled;
Across the streams, above the woods, and so you'll see the world.'
Of course this happened long ago—Oh! very long ago—
But still the fairies keep their word as pussy-willows know.
And, now that you have heard the tale, you will not wonder why
I feel so very sad to-night;—I really want to cry.
The sun will scarcely reach me here; perhaps I'll never bloom:
There'd be no fun in coming out to wither in a room!"
Again there came that little sigh from close beside my bed
And, once again, I thought I felt a kitten touch my head.

A velvet, pussy-touch it was—a coaxing soft caress;
It seemed to say " Do let me go; do *please,* Oh! *please,* say yes."
" My Pussy-willow dear, " I said, " when blossoms are ablow
I'll open wide the window sash—of course I'll let you go.
Just wait until the sun is warm and then I'll call the breeze
To blow you through the meadow sweet, above the garden trees,
Beyond the mountain, past the stream, to very far away;
And there you'll find the willow bush where still the fairies play.
Please give my love to Mother-puss—the elves and fairies too—
And how I wish I had a wing to blow away with you! "

Ragged Robin the Cuckoo Flower

" Wild Ragged Robin, go away,—
You're too untidy here to stay!"
That's what I heard the flowers say
When strolling down the garden way.

Poor Ragged Robin, always torn,
Was now of beauty sadly shorn,
For such unkindness made him mourn
And droop his head and look forlorn.

While, troubled still, I lingered by,
I heard the gentle cuckoo cry:
" O! cuckoo flower, tell me why
You droop your head and sadly sigh."

Then proudly Robin raised his head:
" Because I bear your name," he said,
" By jealous envy they are led
To drive me from the garden bed!"

The Foxglove

Because a wily, sly, old fox
Was wont to chase the hens and cocks,
The farmer set a clever trap,
With hidden spring and falling flap,
And next time Fox came round to steal
He stopped with sudden, frightened squeal:—
The trap had caught him as he passed
And held his paw securely fast!
He pulled and struggled in his pain
And jerked his paw till free again,
But then, alas! the flap of tin
Still held his empty glove of skin.
The poor fox, wondering what to do,
Remembered that a flower grew
In border-beds that fairies love,
Which might, perhaps, do as a glove.
On three legs sadly hobbling back,
The near-by garden to ransack,
He found the plant for which he sought:
A flower in his teeth he caught
And put it on his skin-less paw;—
It fitted as if made therefor.
Then, homeward hobbling down the path,
He heard the garden fairies laugh:—
"The fox has found a glove," they said,
And named the plant in border-bed.

The Fairies' Butter-and-eggs

The tramp is out walking,—his dinner he begs;
He asks at the farm for some butter and eggs.
The farmer's wife says she has nothing to-day;
The cow has run dry and the hens will not lay.
This answer seems strange and it really is queer,
For butter and eggs are so plentiful here!
They grow in the pasture and down by the lane;
Perhaps he will see them when passing again.
What's that he is saying,—they're not the right kind?
Of course he can think so and no one will mind.
As butter-and-eggs for the fairies they grow;
The tramp can go hungry if *he* doesn't know!

The Cow-sow and the Milkweed

You never heard how milkweed came
To be entitled to its name?
It happened, once upon a time
(As we are told in ancient rhyme)
In fairyland there was a cow
Of finer breed than we have now.
Her coat was like the softest silk;
She freely gave her perfect milk.
One very gaily busy day,
When all the fairies were away,
A witch came riding through the sky
And, landing in a field near by,
In rough voice shouted, " Cow, come here!
I want your milk at once, my dear. "
Poor cow,—whatever should she do?
She thought,—then did the best she knew.
The witch had taken off her hat
To use as milk pail. Down she sat
And milked her altogether dry;
But then the cow, so wise and sly,
By just a sudden little kick
Accomplished quite a clever trick.
The pail upset—the milk so sweet
Ran, soaking, round the witch's feet

And, spreading east and west, it grew
As milkweed for the fairies' brew.
'Twas so she saved the fairies' drink;
But when the old witch saw it sink
And heard her cat bewail its loss
Vexation made her very cross.
She said: " You spiteful fairy cow,
I'll make of you an ugly sow;
When next you try to say ' Moo-oo '
You'll find you grunt as piggies do."
On broomstick, then, she rode away.
The cow-sow grunted through the day
Until the fairies home returned
And, much surprised, the sad truth learned—
That their devoted, pretty cow
Had now become an ugly sow!
Of course they laughed—of course they cried;
In vain to comfort her they tried.
They asked the Elf King what to do.
He bade them make a milkweed brew
And bathe the sow from tail to snout
While singing, *" Witch's spell come out!*
Sweet milkweed make this ugly sow
Become again our pretty cow!"
The fairies thought this good advice
And made the brew—it tasted nice.
They bathed the sow and sang the spell.
Its magic worked its wonders well
For soon the ugly, grunting, sow
Became again their moo-ing cow.

. . . . . .

The elves enjoyed the milkweed brew;
The Queen and fairies liked it too;
So Elf King, being kind and clever,
Made milkweed grow forever-ever.

Five Other Names for Clematis

Mother, with *smoking tree* (*tom-bacca*) I've been having fun.
Sonny, I'm shocked to hear about this naughty thing you've done!

Mother, I took the *traveller's joy*—the first that I have seen.
Sonny, how could you be so rude and where can you have been?

Mother, I climbed the broken wall and pulled an *old man's beard.*
Sonny, you've many times been taught that age should be revered.

Mother, I found a *virgin's bower* close beside the wall.
Sonny, I hope you passed it by, not peeping in at all.

Mother, you do not understand—of *clematis* I spoke.
Sonny, you're such a clever boy—at last I see the joke!

The Butter Mine and the Buttercups

I wonder if you'd like to learn
How fairies do without a churn?
In olden days they used a pat
To make the butter smooth and flat;
And then, of course, they churned it too,
As dairymaids all learn to do.
The trouble was from spring to fall
They could not make it last at all.
They made it early every day
But, melting, soon it sank away.
They kept it on a grassy bed
But still it melted—as I've said.
One night the elves came out to play
And join the fairy dance so gay.
The Elf King said to Fairy Queen:
" A curious sight I've lately seen.
Because we're gardeners, you know,
And tend the roots to make them grow,
Beneath the ground we spend our days
At work in secret passage-ways.
And we have found a butter mine;
The butter still is fresh and fine.
Although it must be very old
The earth is moist and keeps it cold.

It is a curious sight indeed;—
There's more than we can ever need."
Then, gaily laughing, said the Queen:
"It's *our* lost butter you have seen!
As summer heat comes year by year
We always see it disappear.
We put it on the grass to cool
But soon it melts and makes a pool;
Then sinks before we've time to cast
A magic spell, to make it last.
But now I know it's safely stored
For you have found the treasure hoard.
I hope, dear King, that all your elves
Will use what they require themselves.
Our pats and churns we'll throw away
For now I know a better way
To get the butter fairies need,—
If my request you'll hear and heed?
When wanting butter fresh and sweet
And ready-made for us to eat,
With fairy wand I'll tap the ground
And you, below, will hear the sound.
Then, please, make butter flowers grow
The very quickest way you know;
And shape them like the fairy cups
To catch and hold the cool dewdrops."
The Elf King said: "Dear Queen, I will.
With magic plow the soil I'll till;
The roots I'll prune with greatest care
And butter flowers soon prepare."

. . . . . .

My tale is done for now you know
That Elf King made the butter grow.
He named the flowers buttercups
Because they hold the cool dewdrops.

The Twin-flower

As Elf King once was passing by
He heard a little flower sigh
And, listening, he heard it say,
" 'Twill be another lonely day!"
The Elf King said, " Dear flower wee,
I wonder now how that can be?
My elves are kind to you, I know,
And 'round you other flowers grow."
" But, Elf King," said the flower wee,
" I'd like to have a twin with me.
I love my friends (indeed I do)
But wish I had a sister too."
Then Elf King said, " I'll ask the Queen—
The Fairy Queen, of course, I mean.
To-night, in dancing through the dell,
Perhaps she'll cast a magic spell."

And so she did. The flower wee
Has got a twin, as you can see.

When the Man in the Moon Took a Holiday

"I am badly in need of a holiday,"
Said the man in the moon to a fairy bright.
"I shall really be ever so much obliged
If you'll hang in the sky, in my place, to-night."

So the fairy appeared when the sun had set;
And she hung in the crescent and smiled at me
When I threw her a kiss, for she looked so sweet,
As I watched from the lake of the balsam tree.

The Adder's Tongue or Dogtooth Violet

I'd heard, but never understood,
The fairies singing in the wood.
Last night I thought, by creeping near,
The meaning of their song to hear.
I listened with my might and main
But only caught the odd refrain:
" The adder's tongue, the adder's tongue,—
The dogtooth or the adder's tongue! "

My head went swimming round and round
As lying still, upon the ground,
I listened more and more perplexed
Until I, stupidly, got vexed
And shouted, " What's this foolish thing
That all you silly fairies sing?
' The adder's tongue, the adder's tongue,—
The dogtooth or the adder's tongue! ' "

At once I found myself alone—
The fairies far away had flown.
The bushes rustled in the wind
And seemed to say, " You've sinned, you've sinned! "
I ran away to home and bed
And pulled the bed-clothes round my head,
But dreamt about the adder's tongue,—
" The dogtooth or the adder's tongue! "

I had a very restless night
And got up when 'twas scarcely light
To catch the elves while sprinkling dew
And ask the Elf King if he knew
Why fairies sang that foolish song,
That echoed in my head so long:
" The adder's tongue, the adder's tongue,—
The dogtooth or the adder's tongue! "

I found him by the hemlock tree
And asked him what the song could be
That fairies sang in forest dense—
A wordy song that had no sense
But haunted me by night and day.
Why did the silly fairies say
" The adder's tongue, the adder's tongue,—
The dogtooth or the adder's tongue? "

The Elf King answered, full of scorn,
" 'Tis without sense that *you* were born!
May years more wisdom to you bring.
You said it was a ' foolish thing '
Because you did not understand
The strangest tale of fairyland:
' The adder's tongue, the adder's tongue,—
The dogtooth or the adder's tongue.'

Go silly boy,—go live and learn
Impatient ignorance to spurn.
And mend your manners;—'twasn't right
To shout at fairies in the night.

It's not for such as you to hear
A wonder-tale, so odd and queer:
'The adder's tongue, the adder's tongue,—
The dogtooth or the adder's tongue!'"

Reluctantly I turned to go;
I hung my head, my steps were slow.
I said, "It really makes me sad
To have you think my manners bad."
Then Elf King said, "This much I'll tell:
A violet in mossy dell
Is called the yellow adder's tongue,—
The dogtooth or the adder's tongue."

You think that I was happy then?
Oh, no indeed! for "which" and "when"
And "where" and "what" I asked in vain.
Now, busy with his dew again,
He would not tell me any more
But left me wondering, as before,
Why fairies sing "The adder's tongue,—
The dogtooth or the adder's tongue!"

Jack-in-the-pulpit

Jack-in-the-pulpit you hide away,—
No one can hear what you've got to say!
Under your canopy, spreading, green,
Covered so well that you're scarcely seen,
Why do you need the protecting flap?
Have you been naughty—or rude, mayhap?
Say that you're sorry and shed a tear;
Preach to yourself and be good, my dear.

The Lion and the Dandelions

A cheeky meadow flower said,
With toss of saucy little head,
" I'm quite a lion in my way
All dressed in yellow petals gay. "
Then Lion's awful self drew near
(His roaring terrible to hear)
And said, " Who's this that takes my name? "
The flower said, " Am I to blame?
You see my yellow's very bright
While yours is quite a dingy sight."
Then Lion growled, " You cheeky you!
I'll eat you though too small to chew. "
And so he did, with frightful laugh,
While round about, with merry chaff,
The trees said, " Dandy lion you! "
That flower's brothers (sisters too)
Indignant at his hapless fate
Said, "*You* can laugh but *we* can wait;
For ' dandelions' we shall be
And unashamed, as you shall see! "

. . . . . .

No lions prowl about to-day,
To mock the meadow flowers gay;
But boldly, by their proud name known,
The dandelions hold their own.

The Stupid Old-bachelor

A bachelor led an untidy life
Without any mother or nurse or wife.
His buttonless clothing hung torn and slack
In danger of falling from off his back.
For lack of the buttons on belts and bands
His rags interfered with his feet and hands
And, slipping down, hopelessly got in his way
Whenever he wanted to work or play.
His house was untidy (he used no broom)
But there he remained, in his lonely gloom,
Until he decided to take a walk
And, just to himself, in the garden talk.
He shuffled along by the flower bed;
" I haven't a button! " is what he said.
Then, all of a sudden, he heard a voice—
It said, " Look about you and take your choice.
You stupid old-bachelor not to know
That bachelor buttons in gardens grow! "
'Twas so he discovered the plants so sweet,
That blossom with buttons all round and neat.

The Fox and the Wild Flowers

A little boy once had a kite which blew him far away.
The wind gave out above a wood so there it had to stay.
Upon an old and crumbling stump much cushion moss had grown
And on this pretty fairy bed the little boy was thrown.
A cunning fox came strolling by and said, "Whose boy are you?
I hope you won't begin to cry—you're looking very blue!"
He answered, "I'm the farmer's boy. What have you on your back?"
The fox replied, "I've got a cock and, if it's food you lack,
Cheer up and come and dine with me. I'm always just and fair;—
Because I stole the cock from you I'll let you have a share."
The little boy said, "Many thanks; I would come if I could.
I'm hungry and the cock is fat—our poultry's always good.
But, I've been told, when dining out one always should be neat
And so, you see, I must decline your kindly offered treat.
I've lost my shoes; I've lost my hat; my hair is sadly messed:
I've got no brush; I've got no comb; I'm very badly dressed!"
"It's true, my boy," replied the fox, "you really look forlorn;
You've lost your shoes and lost your hat; your suit is badly torn.
But moccasins as flowers grow in shaded woodland dell;
I think you'll find, instead of shoes, they answer very well.
And dutchman's breeches too, I think, are blossoming to-day:
They're sometimes called the soldiers' caps, so wear them either way.
My brush I'll lend to smooth your hair; the cock will lend his comb:
So help yourself and dress yourself and make yourself at home."

But still the farmer's little boy sat sadly lost in thought:
He said, "I never ate raw meat—I wonder if I ought?"
The fox replied: "I like it raw but, if you want to cook,
The firewood grows beyond the wood; you'll not have far to look.
Before you start let go your kite. It's caught up in the tree
So what's the use of holding on? I really cannot see."
Just then a sudden breeze came up;—the fox was left alone!
In vain he looked about to find where kite and boy had blown.

The Seaweed Fairy

Across the ocean's waters blue,
To passing breeze, a kiss I threw.
The Seaweed Fairy caught it up
And, holding it in sea-shell cup,
Away, on flying fish, she flew
To take it home, my child, to you.
To-night, when you are fast asleep,
Around your bed she'll softly creep;
Upon your lips my kiss she'll lay:
You'll dream of me so far away.

The Flying Fish and the Rainbow Flowers

As Little Girl and Nurse, one day,
Along the seashore took their way,
A sudden wave threw on the beach
(Within temptation's easy reach)
A shell of such enormous size
That Little Girl, in great surprise,
Excited ran to look inside.
By climbing in the shell she tried
Her pretty dress from wet to save
As round her broke another wave.
But, all at once, just like a boat,
The shell again began to float
And Little Girl was swept to sea
While Nurse stood wailing "Dearie me!"
From foaming waters, sparkling, blue,
Six flying fish about her flew
With seaweed, which they deftly wound
Around the shell till safely bound.
And then they threw between her hands
The reins of shining seaweed bands
To match the harness which they wore.
She knew, of course, what reins were for
And wasn't frightened, didn't cry,
But, laughing, shouted, "Nurse—good-bye!"

And tried to do her duties well
As coachman of the fairies' shell.
The fairy fish flew far and fast
Across the ocean till, at last,
To shores of "*Vibgyor*" they came—
The isles of rainbow colours fame.
Among the seven six she knew
But, as they near the seventh drew,
She wondered what its name could be;—
No trace of colour could she see.
Three fairies waited by the beach
And joy was on the face of each
As "Welcome, Little Girl," they said,
"To Poppy Isle which should be red
But now is colourless and drear.
You know we make the rainbows here
But all of them have given out
Because there is no red about.
And so we thought for you we'd send—
That you, perhaps, your dress would lend.
With such a bright and pretty red
We might refresh our poppy bed.
We had no rainbow fit to use
But hoped our shell you would excuse."
So Little Girl from shell alighted—
To help the fairies quite delighted.
"Of course, of course," she gaily said,
"You're welcome to my dress of red!"
And with the fairies, all the day,
She raked and hoed—they showed the way.
Her dress such red reflections threw

That all the poppies perfect grew.
Before the setting of the sun
Their happy garden work was done.
The fairies said, " We now will show
On perfect rainbows where to go. "

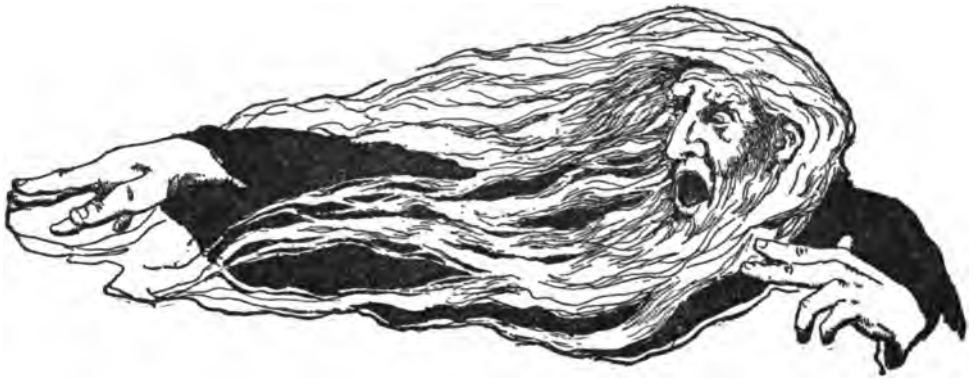
. . . . . .

First up, then down, and hand in hand,
They come to Isle of Violet-land
Where fairies grow their flowers sweet
In garden beds all trim and neat.
Then by another pretty bow
They come to Isle of Indigo—
The plant that fairies always take
A blue of deepest shade to make.
And next a rainbow bridge they climb
To where the fairies spend their time
In growing dear forget-me-nots:
Around they grow—just lots and lots.
And on they go their rainbow way
To Isle of Green but not to stay,
For here the fairies, still at work,
Have much to do. They never shirk
And never think of being tired
For green is always much required.
Through many happy, busy hours
They sing and work in leafy bowers.
By yet another arching lane
(First up then gaily down again)
They pass the Isle of Golden-rod
Where all the fairies till the sod.

And so they come to Orange Isle
Where Little Girl must rest awhile.
And here the fairies make her eat;
The oranges are ripe and sweet.
At last they cross again to red—
The Isle of Poppies, as I've said.
And now the sun is setting fast—
The happy day is nearly past.
" Dear Little Girl, " the fairies say,
" Of course we'd like to have you stay
But, though your dress we had to borrow,
We'd grieve to cause your mother sorrow.
We really think it's time to call
The Storm-man. While his rain-drops fall
We'll hide you in a poppy bower
And so protect you from the shower.
But Storm-man comes with howling blast
His awful thunder-bolts to cast,
And Little Girl is in a fright,
As round her flashes lightning bright,
Until the fairies, laughing, say
" Now, Storm-man, blow yourself away! "
Then Little Girl, to her delight,
Before her sees a rainbow bright—
A rainbow broad and long and gay—
It stretches far and far away.
She hears the gentle fairies dear
Say: " Little Girl, the sky is clear.
We thank you for your pretty red;
Let Rainbow carry you to bed. "

. . . . . .

From sweetest sleep when she awoke
It was her Auntie's voice that spoke.
" Dear Little Girl, " it fondly said,
" While you've been napping on your bed
The rain has cooled the air so warm;
We've had a splendid thunder storm
And, from across the ocean gray,
A rainbow seemed to come this way! "



Storm-man's Toy

When thunder rolls across the sky
I wonder why—I wonder why;

But when I see the lightning glow
Of course I know—of course I know.

. . . . . .

Once Storm-man got a Christmas toy,
To give him joy—to give him joy;

A pretty box of lightning bright,
To use at night—to use at night.

That in the box was Mischief too
He little knew—he little knew;

And Mischief lets the lightning out,
To jump about—to jump about.

Then Storm-man in vexation howls;
He groans and growls—he groans and growls.

Because his lightning's gone again
His tear-drops rain—his tear-drops rain.

He makes his awful thunder crack,
To drive it back—to drive it back;

Then, grumbling still, he shuts the box.
He turns the locks—he turns the locks.

And "Now the storm has stopped" we say:
"It's fine to-day—it's fine to-day."

The Firefly and the Heal-all

One day over all the town
Heavy rain came pouring down.
Little Girl was sadly bored;
Such bad weather she deplored.
When at last the raining stopped
Gleefully she skipped and hopped,
Wildly dancing round about
In impatience to get out,
For the day was getting late
And she felt she couldn't wait.
Then (although it wasn't right
Without asking if she might)
Out of doors she ran in haste,
Not a minute more to waste.
Where the rain had washed the ground
Such a yawning hole she found
That, for fun, she crept inside
And, on finding it was wide,
Tried to walk about with care
To discover what was there.
All at once she tripped and stumbled—
Headlong down in darkness tumbled—
Then, at last, lay bruised and sore
Senseless on a rocky floor.

. . . . . .

When her senses came again
She was stiff and weak from pain
And her dress was all in rags,
Having caught on rocky jags.
Where she was she didn't know
So she cried, " Oh! Nursie, Oh! "
But no Nursie heard her call
And no answer came at all.
Stretching out an anxious hand,
Feeling only rocks and sand,
Long and loud again she cried.
Then to stand up straight she tried,
But the passage here was low
And she bumped her poor head so!
Then she heard a sweet voice say
" Little Girl, look up this way! "
(Looking up she saw a light—
Coming nearer—getting bright.)
" I'm the little Firefly Queen
And to Fairyland I've been.
With the fairies there I played;
They, of me, a fairy made.
I've been sent by them to show
Through the dark which way to go;
And they bade me bring this flower
From the fairy garden bower.
Being heal-all's blossom blue
It will make your dress like new
And will cure you of your pain
So, my dear, cheer up again.
Follow where you see my light;

Keep me always in your sight.
Listen and remember this:
Fairies in the land of bliss,
Where I'm taking you to-day,
Are so hidden far away
That a child they never see
And will sadly frightened be
If for Nurse again you shriek:
Please be careful how you speak.
Children's voices should be low
When to fairyland they go."
Little Girl, with great delight,
Keeping Firefly in her sight
(By the tiny spark-flash knowing
Which direction to be going)
Followed down the winding way,
Neat again and well and gay;
In a sweet and low voice talking,
Through the darkness safely walking,
Till the firefly, just ahead,
In a warning whisper said:
"Now control your voice with care
For we're very nearly there.
It will suddenly be light
When the rocky door's in sight."
Little Girl, of course, said "Yes."
What she'd see she didn't guess
So she scarcely can be blamed
That, delighted, she exclaimed
"Look! Oh, look!" and clapped her hands
When she saw the golden sands

And the lake of radiant blue
Over which the fairies flew.
They had wings like butterflies.
Hand in hand they seemed to rise
Then, in merry, downward swoop,
Made a happy, laughing group.
As the little girl they greeted
"Welcome, welcome!" they repeated.
All this happening in a trice
Was astonishingly nice
Till the closing of the door
Left her in the dark once more.
Little Girl, in her surprise,
Had forgotten to be wise.
From the rocks her voice had rolled,
Loud and high and uncontrolled,
Echoing around the lake—
Making all the fairies shake.
In their unexpected fright
They forgot to be polite—
Didn't even stop to scold—
Left her lonely in the cold.
Then, as she began to weep,
Firefly came and made her sleep.

. . . . . .

When again at last she woke
In a sweet, low voice she spoke.
Where she was she hardly knew
Till she heard her pussy mew—

Looking up saw Nursie dear
To the sofa drawing near.
"Little Girl, wake up!" she said;
"You've been napping—sleepy-head!"

The Little Brown Bunnie

A little brown bunnie came in to-day;
I think that he surely has lost his way.
He blinked with his funny wide-open eyes
While looking about in perplexed surprise.
The carpet was soft, of a velvet green,—
The first of the kind that he'd ever seen.
He nibbled a bit but it tasted odd
And Bunnie was worried—could this be sod?
Whatever it was he would eat no more:
He hobbled about till he found the door.
"Oh stay, little rabbit!" I, coaxing, cried
But poor, frightened Bunnie ran home to hide.

What Becomes of the Sun

You think that the sun goes away
    At the end of the day?
That really is quite a mistake
    For it melts in the lake.
I've seen the star-fairies, so bright,
    Hard at work catching light;
And watched the elves dipping up dew,
    So refreshing and new,—
All shades of blue, purple and pink—
    For the flowers, I think.
The gnomes bring their buckets to fill
    With the gold. What they spill
The witches come quickly to sweep
    To their cauldron so deep;
And soon (when their sweeping is done)
    Nothing's left of the sun.
The cauldron must stand in a pool
    For the liquid to cool:
It takes all the night so, of course,
    Above heather and gorse
Or stretches of bracken and fern,
    Till it's time to return,
The witches can fly where they please
    To cast spells and to tease.

When dawn is just ready to break
They come back to the lake
And, setting the cauldron up high
On a hill, near the sky,
They kindle a fire underneath
And the smoke makes a wreath
As, suddenly, all of a glow
(I have seen so I know)
The sun jumps again with a bound,
From the cauldron so round,
To light us again through the day
Before melting away.

The Sunbeam

A sunbeam danced across my bed
And kissed the pillow by my head:
I thought it ought to kiss me too—
But that is what it did not do!

I tried to catch the sunbeam gay
But then it faded all away:
I'm disappointed as can be—
I wanted it to play with me!

Seafoam Sprite and the Jellyfish Flowers

The wavelets chase the Seafoam Sprite;
The breezes toss the flakes of white;
But, gaily racing down the beach,
They never come within my reach!

. . . . .

When Seafoam Sprite is tired of play
The breezes carry her away.
They take her to the hidden caves
Between the cliffs—above the waves;
For there the dainty sprite of foam
Has her mysterious, pretty home.
The sea gulls often come to call:
They bring the seaweed for the wall
With starfish for the dome above
And, for the floor, the shells they love.
The cave is moist and deep and cool
And, near the centre, is a pool
In which the sprite, with tender care,
Keeps living flowers, strange and rare.
For better ones you could not wish
Although they're really jellyfish.

She rides afar on foaming crest
To choose the ones she likes the best.

. . . . . .

I often lie awake at night
To think about the Seafoam Sprite.
I wish that I could ride the waves
And climb the cliffs and find the caves.

The Butterfly and the Water-lily Fairies

To the Little Girl, one day,
Said a butterfly so gay,
" If you follow after me
You will lily-fairies see."
Little Girl said, " Oh, what fun!
Fly ahead;—I'll climb and run."
Hidden mossy paths they found
Which through lonely forests wound,
Past St. Regis mountain ridge.
Coming to a narrow bridge
Butterfly to water dropped.
Little Girl uncertain stopped
Wondering what she ought to do;
Should she drop to water too?
Then, below her where she stood
On the little bridge of wood,
All at once she saw a boat
('Twas a lily-pad afloat)
So she jumped without delay
And it carried her away.

. . . . . .

On her lily-pad a-riding,
Swiftly down the stream a-gliding,

Little Girl went gaily by—
Following the butterfly
Till it, fluttering, disappeared
As the fairy lake they neared
And a big frog said, " A-g-r-r-um!—
'Tis to Fairyland you've come! "
Here the stream was very wide.
Water-lilies at each side
Seemed with laughter to be ringing,
As if silver bells were singing,
So she thought she'd try to see
What inside of them might be.
Though the greatest pains she took
For an open one to look
Every pretty petal-cup
Shut itself so quickly up
That, at last, she said: " Oh, please
Lily-fairies, do not tease!
Make your petals open wide—
Let me have a look inside."
Then she saw a fairy peeping
And the petals, open keeping,
Showed a face so sweet and dear
That she longed to have it near.
Reaching out the stem to catch
She forgot 'tis rude to snatch
And she pulled with all her might—
But the lily-roots held tight!
Now she heard no laughter ringing,
As if silver bells were singing,
And the fairy hid her face;

Little Girl was in disgrace.
From the water round about
Bullfrogs came a-jumping out
And "Ag-r-r-um!" she heard them croak
As the biggest of them spoke.
"Little Girl, you're doing wrong;
You have spoiled the fairies' song.
Leave the lily where it grew
And be careful what you do!"
Little Girl was in a fright,
But she knew the frog was right,
So she promised that she would
Now be careful to be good.
And she said that she was sorry
She had made the fairies worry.
Then again, from all around,
Came the sweet and joyous sound
Of the fairy laughter ringing,
As if silver bells were singing.
All the lilies opened up—
Smiling face in every cup.
"Please don't think me very silly
But I'd like to be a lily!"
Said the little girl, excited,
And the fairies were delighted.
Then she suddenly felt funny
And it seemed so bright and sunny
That she tried to raise her hand,
And she couldn't understand
When she found no hand was there
To protect her from the glare.

Soon she saw, to her surprise,
Petals white about her rise.
Then they closed in gently round,
As her head with gold was crowned,
And she knew that, willy-nilly,
She was now a water-lily.
So her laugh was sweetly ringing,
Just like silver bells a-singing,
As she said, " What do you eat
When you want the nicest treat? "
Then the fairy waterfly
Came up flying lightly by.
It had wings of shining white
And a body golden bright
With a tail of colours varied.
In its dainty claws it carried
Fairy sugar-bread, so sweet,
For the lily-girl to eat.
But when plentifully fed
Sadly drooped her lily-head.
" Though I liked your fairy bread
I am thirsty now," she said.
And the waterfly replied,
As the lily-fairies sighed,
" You must call the golden sun.
Bid him come up at a run;—
He will quench your thirst for you
For he brings the evening dew."
So she called the golden sun
And he came up at a run.
Then she asked the fairies why

She had heard them sadly sigh.
And, regretfully, they said,
"You have made it time for bed.
Now the sun will go away
So, of course, you cannot stay.
It is time, dear little friend,
Home to bed your way should wend."
Little Girl in trouble said,
"I don't want to go to bed!
Golden Sun, please stop and stay."
But the Sun went on his way
Saying, "Lily-girl, I've brought
Evening dewdrops, so I ought
To be quick about my setting;
And to sleep you should be getting."
Then again the fairies sighed.
As "A-g-r-r-um!" the frogs replied
All the lily petals closed
And the fairies sweetly dozed.

. . . . . .

Little Girl was in her bed
When she waking raised her head
And her sister standing near
Said: "It's time to get up, dear!
You've been dreaming, little sister."
And she stooped and gently kissed her.
"No, indeed!" she said, "I'm certain
I've been out beyond the mountain,
On a lily-pad a-riding
Where the stream goes quickly gliding.

And the big frog said, " A-g-r-r-um! –
'Tis to Fairyland you've come! "
And I saw the fairy lake—
Oh, *I'm sure I was awake!* "

The Shad-plum Tree

Around a fairy lake I know
  The shad trees in profusion grow.
'Tis there, in spring, the fairies go
  To see the blossoms all ablow.

They climb the shad tree's branching towers
  And, dancing, shake down fairy showers;
Then gather up the fallen flowers
  And with them deck their fairy bowers.

From blossom pillows they awake
  And many graceful garlands make
To deck themselves when flights they take,—
  Half skimming flights across the lake.

The fairies call the blossoms " snow "
  And love to see them swirl and blow
As, on the breeze, they come and go,
  Or on the lake reflections throw.

If you in Fairyland would be
  When springtime comes, then come with me;
In Regis Lake reflected see
  The glory of the shad-plum tree.

When the Trumpet Flowers Called the Mountain Folk

I could not sleep although I'd gone to bed,
And, in the darkness, fancies filled my head.
I thought of all the funny little gnomes
That way beyond the mountain have their homes.
I'd seen their pictures in my fairy books
And didn't altogether like their looks
But, still, I wished to see one for myself—
And how I wished that I could see an elf!
The pictures showed them slender, young and gay,
While gnomes had beards and looked so queer and gray
And very wise and very, very old.
They live in hidden mines and make the gold
While elves are busy making flowers grow.
I've read it in my book and so I know.
And in my book I've read of other things:
Of little fairies with their pretty wings;

Of ugly witches flying round at night;
Of Storm-man, Dragon-green and Sea-foam Sprite.
I whispered softly, " Come and play with me!
I'm wide awake and lonely as can be."
Then, suddenly, I heard the trumpets call—
The trumpets of the creepers on the wall.
I wondered if the mountain folk would hear
The echo of their music soft and clear.
And then I heard a soft *"Cling-clang! Cling-clang!"*
As if the flower bells in answer rang.
The moon was shining; all the stars were out
And shadows seemed to strangely move about.
I saw a fairy through my window peep
To see if I was really not asleep;
And then I thought (although I wasn't certain)
That little elves were looking through the curtain.
A gnome came hobbling from the cupboard door
To sit down in the moonlight on the floor.
A witch, on broomstick, past my window flew
And I could hear her cat's uncanny mew.
I almost jumped—it gave me such a fright
Across the stillness of the summer night.
And then I thought I heard old Dragon-green
(But very far away he must have been).
And, after that, I felt a sudden breeze
As Sea-foam Sprite came racing through the trees.
Then Storm-man came and brought his lightning bright;
I shut my eyes against the flashing light.
Of course I heard his awful thunder clap
But then, I think, I must have had a nap
For, when I heard the patter of the rain

And raised my head to look around again,
The elves had gone—the gnome and fairy too.
I heard no dragon—no uncanny mew.
And where was Storm-man? Where was Sea-foam Sprite?
Perhaps they thought I hadn't been polite.
If ever *you* should hear the trumpets call
Be careful not to take a nap at all.

The Snowdrops

Where do the pretty fairies go
  When all the world is white with snow?
I asked the sun—he did not know;
  He never saw the fairies go.

Where do the gentle fairies stay
  When all the sky is cold and gray?
I asked the moon—he could not say;
  He wonders where the fairies stay.

Where do the little fairies hide
  When on the ice we slip and slide?
I asked the stars—they only sighed;
  It's lonely when the fairies hide.

Where do the pretty fairies go?
  I think, perhaps, the flowers know.
I'll wait until the snowdrops grow,
  And ask them where the fairies go.

A Bunch of Mistletoe

I lay in bed and wondered what poor Santa Claus would do;—
We had no open fire-place and our chimney was a flue.
He'd find it inconvenient. If he got inside at all
I hoped that he'd be careful in the furnace not to fall.
I thought of all the toys that in the fire were sure to drop;—
How could I reach dear Santa Claus and caution him to stop?
My bed was near the window. As I looked across the town
I noticed that the moon, with friendly smile, was looking down.
" My child," he said, " don't worry; Santa Claus is old and wise.
He'll come in by the fire-escape—but you must shut your eyes!
I saw him getting mistletoe to hang above your head:
If you're asleep he'll kiss you as he tip-toes round your bed."
These words, so reassuring, drove away my anxious fears.
I nestled in my pillows, as I dried my foolish tears,
And slept until the morning sun was sparkling on the snow;
Then, right above my head, I saw a bunch of mistletoe.
Dear Santa Claus had kissed me, as the moon had said he would;
And in the big arm-chair, which by the open window stood,
Such lots and lots of toys and books and pretty things I found:
He'd come and gone away again—I hadn't heard a sound!

Above the Tree-tops with the Sea Gulls

" Mother dear, I'd like to go
Out to play in all the snow."
" Little Girl, the sky is gray;
In the house you'd better stay.
When I've dressed the Christmas tree
I shall call you in to see
And to help me give the toys
To the other girls and boys;
For I think that you will find
Santa Claus has left behind
Christmas gifts enough for you
And for all the others too."
Little Girl said, " Oh, how nice!"
And forgot the snow and ice,

Being happy as could be
While she thought about the tree.
But it took so long to dress
That at last (I must confess)
As she by the window stood
'Twas not easy to be good.
She could hear the sea gulls call
As she watched the snowflakes fall.
The temptation was so strong
That (not meaning to do wrong)
She threw up the window sash.
Then she knew that she'd been rash,
For the cold and snow blew in
And her dress was very thin:
Nurse, of course, would have to scold
If she carelessly caught cold.
Putting on her warmest coat
Danger seemed again remote.
Both arms through the window stretching,
She was busy snowflakes catching
When a gust of wind came shaking,
Of her coat a balloon making!
Through the window she was twirled—
Up above the tree-tops hurled.
But that wasn't high enough
For another sudden puff
Carried her so far and high
That she landed in the sky.
Everywhere, to left, to right,
Clouds were floating, soft and white.
Close beside her sat a bird

And a funny voice she heard
Speaking, as the sea gulls do,
Words that sounded like "Mee-ew!"
Little Girl, her fears to lull,
Said, "Are you a fairy gull?"
Sea Gull answered: "No, my dear,—
Fairies do not live up here;
But I'll tell you what I know.
If to Fairyland you'd go
Carefully this lesson learn—
Round about you must not turn.
Do not try to raise your head
From the cloud which is your bed.
Do not peep with either eye;
Do not cough and do not sigh.
Say, '*To Fairyland I go!*'
Say it slowly—say it low,
Without stopping for a second
Till ten minutes you have reckoned."
Lying still upon her cloud
Little Girl said, fast and loud,
(For how long she didn't know)
"'*Tis to Fairyland I go!*"
Then she coughed and gave a sigh
And she peeped with half an eye.
As she turned and raised her head,
"Where is Fairyland?" she said.
Though she looked to left and right
Not a fairy was in sight—
Only clouds and nothing more
But the sea gull as before.

Then she felt that she was sinking
And she thought that he was winking
As he said—" Mee-ew! Mee-ew!—
Silly Girl, I laugh at you!
You had only just begun
When you thought that you had done."
" Let me have another try!"
Was the little girl's reply.
" I suppose I reckoned wrong
But the time seemed very long."
Sea Gull sadly shook his head;
" Too late now, my dear," he said.
" Your balloon got emptied out
When you turned all round about.
'Twas a silly thing to do;—
And your lungs are empty too!
When you want your breath to last
You should never speak so fast.
Without wind in lungs and coat
Now, of course, you cannot float;
You are sinking out of sight
And it really serves you right.
Silly Girl—Mee-ew! Mee-ew!—
I must say ' Good-bye ' to you."
True it was (too true, alas!)
Soon she saw the tree-tops pass
And she tried in vain to stop
Till she landed with a flop.
Then she felt confused and dazed
As she looked around amazed.
In a bed of softest snow

She was lying just below
Her own window open wide;
And her mother, from inside,
With a sadly puzzled frown
In astonishment looked down
As she said, " My daughter dear,
You are badly hurt I fear! "
Laughing Little Girl replied:
" On a cloud I've had a ride!
Far away up in the sky
Where the mewing sea gulls fly.
Falling didn't hurt a bit;—
But *my coat is not a fit!*
It was bought too big, you know,
Leaving room for me to grow;
So it made a fine balloon—
Though it emptied much too soon.
Oh! I hope again some day
It will carry me away."